

[Data Accessibility]

Section 21181 is added to read:

21181. (a) The Legislature recognizes that many lead agencies have established web sites that link to digital versions of their CEQA documents. The Legislature encourages all state and local lead agencies to increase efficiency of CEQA document preparation through use of information technology systems such as geographic information systems (GIS); to prepare their CEQA documents in digital formats enabling electronic access; and to establish CEQA document web sites accessible to the public.

(b) The Resources Agency and OPR shall prepare a study by September 30, 2007 to further implement the policy on CEQA document databases established in Section 21003(d). The study shall recommend the most cost-effective ways to make information in past CEQA documents accessible electronically. The study shall also address the varying quality and accuracy of information in CEQA documents, and funding methods to implement the study recommendations.

(c) Alternatives to be considered in the study include but are not limited to: requiring all CEQA documents to be prepared in standardized digital formats; minimum standards for lead agency web sites with links to environmental documents; a state portal for electronic access to all on-line CEQA documents; and expansion of the following California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES) data bases to include links to on-line CEQA documents or data sets in these documents: the CEQAnet data base, the California Spatial Information Library, and the California Environmental Information Library.

(d) Upon completion of the study the Resources Agency, in consultation with the State Clearinghouse of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, shall provide a report to the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality and the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources regarding the need for a grant of additional statutory authority and funding in order to implement the recommendations of the report.